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Harris visits Latin America to tackle migration, corruption

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE and CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Kamala Harris, on her first foreign trip as vice president, is looking to deepen diplomatic ties with Guatemala and Mexico, two Latin American nations key to the Biden administration's efforts to stem the spike in migration at the U.S. border. Harris, who departed Washington on Sunday after a delay caused by a technical issue on Air Force Two, is seeking to secure commitments for greater cooperation on border security and economic investment, but corruption in the region — a far more intractable challenge — will complicate her efforts.

Continued on Page 2



BORDER RUN

Vice President Kamala Harris waves goodbye prior boarding Air Force Two at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Sunday, June 6, 2021, en route to Guatemala City.

Associated Press



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Harris visits Latin America to tackle migration, corruption

Continued from Front

It's already had a significant impact on her work in the region. Harris has yet to engage substantively with the leaders of Honduras and El Salvador, who are both embroiled in corruption scandals. And it's an issue that experts in the region say will need to be addressed to make any lasting changes.

"Corruption is a cancer in the region," said Jason Marczak, director of the Atlantic Council's Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center. "Addressing corruption is fundamental to creating hope and creating the potential for opportunity."

Marczak noted that corruption in the region affects human rights protections, employment opportunities, the cost of goods and much more. Jobs, he said, will come "with investment, and investment comes where there is certainty in the rule of law." Without that, efforts to improve living conditions can only go so far.

In the months since she was tasked by President Joe Biden with addressing the root causes of migration to the U.S.-Mexico border, Harris has laid out an approach centered on creating better opportunities and living conditions in the region through humanitarian and economic aid.

Harris announced plans to send \$310 million to provide support for refugees and address food shortages, and recently secured commitments from a dozen companies and organizations to invest in the Northern Triangle countries to promote economic opportunity and job training.

Washington won some goodwill through its vaccine diplomacy this past week. Guatemala's president, Alejandro Giammattei, and Mexico's Andrés Manuel López Obrador both received calls from Harris on Thursday telling them the U.S. would be sending 500,000 doses and 1 million doses, respectively, of COVID-19 vaccine.

About 30 minutes into Har-



Vice President Kamala Harris, center, makes a double thumbs up sign toward members of the media after exiting Air Force Two after a technical issue required the plane to return to Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Sunday, June 6, 2021, after it had already started begun flying to Guatemala City.

ris' flight to Guatemala City on Sunday afternoon, a technical issue forced Air Force Two to return to Joint Base Andrews. She departed on another plane about an hour and a half later.

While in Guatemala, Harris plans to meet community leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs. In Mexico, Harris will participate in a conversation with female entrepreneurs and hold a roundtable with labor workers. That's in addition to bilateral meetings with the leaders of both countries.

Harris said during a May meeting with Guatemalan justice leaders that corruption is a "significant deterrent" to economic investment there.

She's underscored the need to address corruption in public remarks and events. In her meeting with a number of leading voices on Guatemala's justice system, she noted her work as a prosecutor and said that "injustice is a root cause of migration."

Harris has also raised the issue during virtual meetings with the leaders of both countries and aides say she will do it again during meetings on her trip.

"There are acute factors — natural disasters, food insecurity, the climate crisis, and then there are

root causes — poverty, violence, corruption," said Harris' chief spokesperson, Symone Sanders. "From the vice president's perspective, this is about helping build hope in the region, and that a better life is in fact possible at home."

While in Latin America, Harris will also have to navigate the politics of immigration. Congressional Republicans have criticized both Biden and Harris for deciding not to visit the border, and contend the administration is ignoring what they say is a crisis there. April was the second-busiest month on record for unaccompanied children encountered at the U.S.-Mexico border, following March's all-time high. The Border Patrol's total encounters in April were up 3% from March, marking the highest level since April 2000.

Conservatives will be watching Harris closely for any missteps, hoping to drag her into further controversy on an issue that they see as a political winner.

In her efforts to win commitments on corruption from the region's leaders, Harris can point to a number of moves by the Biden administration this past week.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken emphasized the

problem during his own recent trip to Central America. The White House issued a memo elevating foreign corruption to a major national security issue, and directed all federal agencies to prioritize it and modernize their foreign corruption-fighting tools.

Eric Olson, director of policy at the Seattle International Foundation, which works to promote good governance in Central America, said that addressing corruption will take particular diplomatic skill. Harris will need to hold the leaders of Guatemala and Mexico accountable while also deepening trust and cooperation with the two nations.

"The challenge that she faces is how to, on the one hand, have a conversation, keep the door open — while not seeming to ignore the obvious elephant in the room, which is this incredible penetration of the state by corrupt actors," he said. In Mexico, López Obrador continues to face a complicated security situation in many parts of the country. Nearly three-dozen candidates or pre-candidates were killed before this weekend's midterm elections as drug cartels sought to protect their interests. The government's inability

to provide security in parts of the country is of interest to the U.S. in an immigration context, both for the people who are displaced by violence and the impact it has on a severely weakened economy trying reemerge from the pandemic.

The number of Mexicans encountered by U.S. Customs and Border Protection rose steadily from December through April. Mexico remains a key U.S. ally in trying to slow immigration, not only of its own citizens, but those crossing its territory. Successive U.S. administrations have effectively tried to push their immigration enforcement goals south to Mexico and Guatemala. Nongovernmental organizations placed Guatemala's widespread corruption at the top of their list of concerns before Harris' visit. Last month, two lawyers who are outspoken critics of Giammattei's administration were arrested on what they say were trumped-up charges aimed at silencing them.

The selection of judges for Guatemala's Constitutional Court, its highest, was mired in influence peddling and alleged corruption. Giammattei picked his chief of staff to fill one of the five vacancies. When Gloria Porras, a respected force against corruption, was elected to a second term, the congress controlled by Giammattei's party refused to seat her.

Harris' visit comes with high expectations, but organizations concerned about the rule of law and corruption in Guatemala have doubts about what the U.S. can do to halt the deterioration or co-optation of government institutions.

Tiziano Breda, a Central America analyst with Crisis Group, said the challenge for Harris "is to not play the Guatemalan government's game, where on one side it expresses willingness to collaborate with the United States while on the other it takes steps that weaken the rule of law, accountability and the fight against corruption." □

Associated Press

High court asked to review men-only draft registration law

By JESSICA GRESKO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is being asked to decide whether it's sex discrimination for the government to require only men to register for the draft when they turn 18.

The question of whether it's unconstitutional to require men but not women to register could be viewed as one with little practical impact. The last time there was a draft was during the Vietnam War, and the military has been all-volunteer since. But the registration requirement is one of the few remaining places where federal law treats men and women differently, and women's groups are among those arguing that allowing it to stand is harmful. The justices could say as soon as Monday whether they will hear a case involving the Military Selective Service Act, which requires men to register for the draft. Ria Tabacco Mar, the director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Women's Rights Project, who is urging the court to take up the issue, says requiring men to register imposes a "serious burden on men that's not being imposed on women." Men who do not register can lose eligibility for student loans and civil service jobs, and failing to register is also a felony punishable by a fine of up to \$250,000 and five years in prison.



In this Aug. 21, 2015, file photo, Army 1st Lt. Shaye Haver, center, and Capt. Kristen Griest, right, pose for photos with other female West Point alumni after an Army Ranger school graduation ceremony at Fort Benning, Ga. Haver and Griest became the first female graduates of the Army's rigorous Ranger School.

But Tabacco Mar says the male-only requirement does more than that.

"It's also sending a tremendously harmful message that women are less fit than men to serve their country in this particular way and conversely that men are less fit than women to stay home as caregivers in the event of an armed conflict. We think those stereotypes demean both men and women," she said.

Even if the draft is never used again, retaining the men-only requirement sends a "really damaging message," said Tabacco

Mar, who represents the National Coalition For Men and two individual men challenging the law

A group of retired senior military officers and the National Organization for Women Foundation are among the others urging the court to take the case. If the court agrees to hear the case, it wouldn't be deciding whether women have to register, just whether the current system is constitutional. If it isn't, then it would then be up to Congress to decide how to respond, either by passing a law requiring everyone to

register or deciding registration is no longer necessary. The issue of who has to register for the draft has been to the court before. In 1981, the court voted 6-3 to uphold the men-only registration requirement. At the time, the decision was something of an outlier because the court was regularly invalidating gender-based distinctions in cases about other areas of the law. Many of those cases were brought by the founding director of the ACLU's Women's Rights Project, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who became a justice in 1993.

Associated Press

The last time the high court considered the Military Selective Service Act, then-Justice William Rehnquist explained that the purpose of registration "was to prepare for a draft of combat troops." He said that because women could not serve in combat, the law was not unlawful sex discrimination that violated the Constitution.

But military policy has changed. In 2013, the Department of Defense lifted the ban on women serving in combat. Two years later, the department said all military roles would be open to women without exception. Just last year, a congressional commission concluded that the "time is right" to extend the obligation to register to women. "The current disparate treatment of women unacceptably excludes women from a fundamental civic obligation and reinforces gender stereotypes about the role of women, undermining national security," the commission said in a report.

The Biden administration is urging the justices not to take the case and to let Congress instead tackle the issue. Administration lawyers wrote in a brief that any "reconsideration of the constitutionality of the male-only registration requirement ... would be premature at this time" because Congress is "actively considering" the issue. □

Energy chief cites risk of cyberattacks crippling power grid

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm on Sunday called for more public-private cooperation on cyber defenses and said U.S. adversaries already are capable of using cyber intrusions to shut down the U.S. power grid. "I think that there are very malign actors who are trying," she said. She added: "Even as we speak, there are thousands of attacks on all aspects of the energy sector and the private sector generally." Granholm noted, without mentioning the company by name, that Colonial

Pipeline Co. was hit in May with a crippling cyberattack by a ransomware group.

Colonial temporarily shut down its gasoline distribution networks in the South before paying \$4.4 million to the hackers. She urged energy companies to resist paying ransom.

"The bottom line is, people, whether you're private sector, public sector, whatever, you shouldn't be paying ransomware attacks, because it only encourages the bad guys," she said.

Granholm even spoke in favor of having a law that would ban paying such

ransom, though she said, "I don't know whether Congress or the president is at that point."

Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the United States and other countries should talk to countries such as Russia, which is believed to be the origin on some ransomware attacks, about law enforcement and intelligence cooperation "to shut it down."

Rice said this would "test the reality of how much the Russian government is or is not involved" in these attacks.

Granholm was on CNN's



Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm attends the inaugural meeting of the Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, in Harris' ceremonial office, Thursday, May 13, 2021, on the White House complex in Washington.

Associated Press

"State of the Union" and NBC's "Meet the Press," and

Rice appeared on "Face the Nation" on CBS. □

Cleared Chicago priest holds first Mass since reinstatement

By SOPHIA TAREEN

Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — An activist Roman Catholic priest cleared by an Archdiocese of Chicago investigation into claims that he sexually abused several boys decades ago returned to the pulpit of his longtime church on Sunday for the first time in five months.

"It's good to be home," the Rev. Michael Pfleger repeatedly told congregants of the Faith Community of St. Sabina, describing his time away during the investigation as a "painful nightmare."

Pfleger, 72, was placed on leave in January amid allegations from two brothers who said Pfleger sexually abused them as children starting in the 1970s. A third man later also alleged that Pfleger molested him once in 1979 when he was 18. Last month, the archdiocese concluded there was "insufficient reason to suspect" that Pfleger had abused children. A police investigation remains open. His first service back at the largely Black church on Chicago's South South was as spirited as ever, with live music, dancing and reenergized congregants who have fiercely backed their priest. Pfleger, who is white, thanked congregants for supporting him and vowed to resume his activism, especially against gun vio-



A parishioner raises Rev. Michael Pfleger's arm as he conducts his first Sunday church service as a senior pastor at St. Sabina Catholic Church following his reinstatement by Archdiocese of Chicago after decades-old sexual abuse allegations against minors, Sunday, June 6, 2021, in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood in Chicago.

Associated Press

lence, with even more gusto.

"I'm going to fight harder, because I'm stronger, I'm better and I'm wiser. ... The last five months have been a roller coaster of hurt and anger and depression and pain and not knowing what people are thinking about you," he said, his voice breaking at times.

To support Pfleger, church members have held rallies, flooded archdiocese phone lines, threatened to withhold church dues and launched a letter-writing campaign. On Sunday, some wore T-shirts featur-

ing the priest's photo and the message "Pfleger is back." Among those in attendance was filmmaker Spike Lee, who is friends with Pfleger and whose 2015 movie "Chi-raq" featured a character inspired by Pfleger and played by John Cusack.

Pfleger is known for his anti-violence activism and for bolstering neighborhood development in the largely low-income neighborhood surrounding the church. He's also been in the spotlight for clashing with church leaders, having been suspended twice

before this year, including in 2008 during Barack Obama's presidential campaign when he mocked Obama's primary opponent Hillary Clinton.

Ordained in 1975 and assigned to St. Sabina, Pfleger became pastor six years later and lived at the nearby rectory until earlier this year, when he temporarily moved to an apartment during the investigation. Police have said their investigation remains "open and active," but they haven't provided any details about it. Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx has said po-

lice haven't presented any information for her office to review or determine if criminal charges are appropriate. Illinois has no statute of limitations for filing charges in major sex crimes.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services completed its review in February, concluding there was no credible evidence of child abuse or neglect. The agency, which doesn't investigate allegations of abuse by an adult victim, focused on whether children were currently at risk. During Sunday's service, Pfleger talked about street violence in Chicago. He also acknowledged the damage that the abuse allegations did to his reputation.

He didn't talk about the allegations in detail, aside from saying the false accusations to "destroy his character" began with an "extortion letter." One of the brothers, who are in their 60s, has acknowledged that he asked Pfleger for a \$20,000 payment in December.

"I know my name will be damaged for the rest of my life," Pfleger said as congregants booed. "But most of that is by people that hated me anyway. There are people watching today that are not happy that I'm back. But take off your party hat and blow out the candles. I'm back." □

2nd South Carolina inmate seeking to block electrocution

By MEG KINNARD

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — An inmate scheduled to die later this month under South Carolina's recently reworked capital punishment law is asking to take part in another inmate's federal request to block his electrocution, with his attorneys arguing that combining their cases would save the courts time and money.

In papers filed in federal court on Friday, attorneys for Freddie Owens sought permission to intervene in a request filed a day earlier by Brad Sigmon. On

Thursday, Sigmon's lawyers sought to halt his upcoming execution in the electric chair, arguing the state hasn't exhausted all methods to procure the drugs needed to carry out lethal injection, South Carolina's default method.

Allowing him to intervene in Sigmon's case, Owens' lawyers wrote, "serves the interest of judicial economy and avoids redundant or inconsistent judgments" due to the similarities of the men's requests.

Both men have exhausted their traditional appeals. Owens' execution is scheduled for June 25. Sigmon is

scheduled to die a week earlier, on June 18. A hearing in the federal case is set for Wednesday.

Attorneys for both inmates were expected in state court Monday, for arguments that South Carolina's new law is unconstitutional because the men were sentenced under an older iteration of the statute that made lethal injection the default execution method. That lawsuit was filed shortly after Gov. Henry McMaster signed into law a bill that forces death row inmates for now to choose between the electric chair or a newly formed firing squad, in

hopes the state can restart executions after an involuntary 10-year pause that the state attributed to the inability to procure lethal injection drugs. Lethal injection remains the default method, but the new law compels the condemned to choose between electrocution and a firing squad if drugs aren't available. In the papers filed Friday, Owens' attorneys included an affidavit from state Corrections Director Bryan Stirling, who notes that the only method available to the state is electrocution. South Carolina's last execution took place in 2011, and

its lethal injection drugs expired in 2013. The state, one of eight that still electrocute inmates, has yet to assemble a firing squad. There are 37 men on the state's death row.

The other three states that allow a firing squad are Mississippi, Oklahoma and Utah, according to the Death Penalty Information Center. Three inmates, all in Utah, have been killed by firing squad since the U.S. reinstated the death penalty in 1977. Nineteen inmates have died in the electric chair this century, according to the center. □

Normandy commemorates D-Day with small crowds, but big heart

By SYLVIE CORBET

Associated Press

COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER,
France (AP) —

When the sun rises over Omaha Beach, revealing vast stretches of wet sand extending toward distant cliffs, one starts to grasp the immensity of the task faced by Allied soldiers on June 6, 1944, landing on the Nazi-occupied Normandy shore. The 77th anniversary of D-Day was marked Sunday with several events to commemorate the decisive assault that led to the liberation of France and Western Europe from Nazi control, and honor those who fell.

"These are the men who enabled liberty to regain a foothold on the European continent, and who in the days and weeks that followed lifted the shackles of tyranny, hedgerow by Normandy hedgerow, mile by bloody mile," Britain's ambassador to France, Lord Edward Llewellyn, said at the inauguration of a new British monument to D-Day's heroes.

On D-Day, more than 150,000 Allied troops landed on the beaches code-named Omaha, Utah, Juno, Sword and Gold, carried by 7,000 boats. This year on June 6, the beaches stood vast and nearly empty as the sun emerged, exactly 77 years since the



Veterans sing as they watch the official opening of the British Normandy Memorial in France via a live feed, during a ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, England, Sunday, June 6, 2021.

Associated Press

dawn invasion.

For the second year in a row, anniversary commemorations are marked by virus travel restrictions that prevented veterans or families of fallen soldiers from the U.S., Britain, Canada and other Allied countries from making the trip to France. Only a few officials were allowed exceptions. At the newly-built British Normandy Memorial near the village of Ver-sur-Mer, bagpipes played memorial tunes and warplanes zipped overhead trailing

red-white-and-blue smoke. Socially distanced participants stood in awe at the solemnity and serenity of the site, providing a spectacular and poignant view over Gold Beach and the English Channel.

The new monument pays tribute to those under British command who died on D-Day and during the Battle of Normandy.

A text carved on the wall writes: "They died so that Europe might be free."

Visitors stood to salute the more than 22,000 men

and women, mostly British soldiers, whose names are etched on its stone columns. Giant screens showed D-Day veterans gathered simultaneously at Britain's National Memorial Arboretum to watch the Normandy event remotely. Prince Charles, speaking via video link, expressed regret that he couldn't attend in person.

On June 6, 1944, "In the heart of the mist that enveloped the Normandy Coast ... was a lightning bolt of freedom," French Defense

Minister Florence Parly told the ceremony. "France does not forget. France is forever grateful."

Charles Shay, a Penobscot Native American who landed as an U.S. army medic on June 6, 1944 and now calls Normandy home, was the only surviving D-Day veteran at the Ver-sur-Mer ceremony.

Another veteran of the Battle of Normandy, British Capt. David Mylchreest, was also present. He landed with his team in Normandy on June 12, 1944, to replace officers who had died in the first days of the fight.

Shay then took part in a commemoration at the American Cemetery later in the day in Colleville-sur-Mer, on a bluff overseeing Omaha Beach, in the presence of officials from the United States, Canada, Britain, Germany and other allied countries.

The cemetery contains 9,380 graves, most of them for servicemen who lost their lives in the D-Day landings and ensuing operations. Another 1,557 names are inscribed on the Walls of the Missing.

Most public events have been canceled, and the official ceremonies were limited to a small number of selected guests and dignitaries. □

Turkey's leader vows to cure Marmara of 'sea snot' flare-ups

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkey's president promised Saturday to rescue the Marmara Sea from an outbreak of "sea snot" that is alarming marine biologists and environmentalists.

A huge mass of marine mucilage, a thick, slimy substance made up of compounds released by marine organisms, has bloomed in Turkey's Marmara, as well as in the adjoining Black and Aegean Seas.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said untreated waste dumped into the Marmara Sea and climate change

had caused the sea snot bloom. Istanbul, Turkey's largest city with some 16 million residents, and five other provinces, factories and industrial hubs border the sea.

Marine mucilage has reached unprecedented levels this year in Turkey. It is visible above the water as a slimy gray sheet along the shores of Istanbul and neighboring provinces. Underwater videos showed suffocated coral covered with sea snot.

Erdogan said he instructed the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization to coordinate with relevant institutions, municipalities and

universities.

Teams are inspecting waste water and solid waste facilities, along with other potential sources of pollution, he said.

"We will save our seas from this mucilage calamity, leading with the Marmara Sea," Erdogan said. "We must take this step without delay."

Marine experts say that human waste and industrial pollution is choking Turkey's seas.

They say the rise in water temperatures from climate change is contributing to the problem. □



An aerial photo of Pendik port in Asian side of Istanbul, Friday, June 4, 2021, with a huge mass of marine mucilage, a thick, slimy substance made up of compounds released by marine organisms, in Turkey's Marmara Sea.

Associated Press

Dutch woman, three children repatriated from Syria IS camp

QAMISHLI, Syria (AP) — The Kurdish-led administration in Syria's northeast handed over on Saturday to the Netherlands a Dutch woman, her two young sons, and a Dutch girl, who lived in a camp for families of alleged Islamic State militants.

A delegation from the Netherlands led by special envoy to Syria Emiel de Bont received the four in Qamishli city, at the Kurdish administration's offices. The group will be taken home and Kurdish authorities say the adult woman faces no criminal charges by his administration.

The move was a small step to resolve a complicated issue for European and Middle Eastern countries—what to do with the thousands of their citizens who have traveled to territories held by IS militants in Syria and Iraq.

At a news conference organized for the handover, De Bont said the four had been living in a small settlement known as Roj camp, holding mostly western women who had travelled to Syria and Iraq, and their children.



Children gather outside their tents, at al-Hol camp, which houses families of members of the Islamic State group, in Hasakeh province, Syria, Saturday, May 1, 2021.

Associated Press

"This is a very specific consular legal mission which my government has decided to undertake because a Dutch court of law issued rulings in these specific cases," De Bont said. He gave no further details about the rulings.

It was the second time Dutch nationals have been repatriated from camps in northeast Syria, where

thousands of foreigners and Iraqis have been living since the defeat of the extremist group in 2019. Two Dutch orphans were repatriated in June 2019.

European countries have been reluctant to repatriate their nationals living in such circumstances. Most are concerned that there is not enough evidence to try those who had joined the

militant group, or fear they maintain links to IS.

A Dutch court ruled last year that authorities are not obliged to repatriate a group of 23 Dutch women and their 56 children currently detained in Northern Syria. Experts said there would be exceptions for individual cases.

The Syrian Kurdish authorities, who were part of the

international coalition that fought against IS, say the camps where over 70,000 IS family members are staying are a security threat and a burden.

The Kurds are still fighting off militants on the run, and fear the camps may also hold some active IS members.

"The International community must bear its responsibilities regarding bringing those militants to trial and repatriating their nationals," said Syrian Kurdish official Abdulkarim Omar. He pleaded for assistance to manage another camp, the larger, sprawling al-Hol, which he called "the most dangerous camp in the world."

Aid groups have described dire conditions in al-Hol, which Syrian Kurdish officials have struggled to control and where killings have been on the rise. They are believed to be carried out by IS supporters as punishment against those who stray from the group's extreme ideology.

Thousands are also held in prisons, with formal legal procedures and trials held only rarely. □

Nigerian government-enforced Twitter suspension takes effect



In this April 26, 2017, file photo is a Twitter app icon on a mobile phone in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

By SAM OLUKOYA
Associated Press

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — Millions of Nigerians were unable to access Twitter Saturday after the government enforced an indefinite suspension of the microblogging platform's operations in Nigeria.

The Association of Licensed

Telecommunication Operators of Nigeria said in a statement that its members have suspended access to Twitter in compliance with a government directive to do so.

The Nigeria government said Friday it was indefinitely suspending Twitter in Africa's most populous nation,

after the company deleted a controversial tweet President Muhammadu Buhari made about a secessionist movement.

Minister of Information and Culture Lai Mohammed said Friday that government officials decided to suspend Twitter because the platform was being used "for activities that are capable of undermining Nigeria's corporate existence."

Mohammed criticized Twitter for deleting the post, saying, "The mission of Twitter in Nigeria is very suspicious," and that Twitter had in the past ignored inciting tweets against the Nigerian government.

In recent months, pro-Biafra separatists have been accused of attacking police and government buildings. In his tweet, Buhari vowed to "treat them in the lan-

guage they understand." Twitter had deleted Buhari's post on Wednesday, calling it abusive.

More than 1 million people died during the 1967-1970 civil war that erupted when secessionists from the southeast sought to create an independent Biafra for the ethnic Igbo people. Buhari, an ethnic Fulani, was on the opposing side in the war against the Igbos.

The government's decision to suspend Twitter is being widely condemned. Amnesty International said it condemns the Nigerian government's suspension of a social media widely used by Nigerians to exercise their human rights including their rights to freedom of expression and access to information.

"We call on the Nigerian authorities to immediately reverse the unlawful sus-

pension and other plans to gag the media, repress the civic space, and undermine Nigerians' human rights," Amnesty said in a statement.

The U.S. mission in Nigeria said that Nigeria's constitution provides for freedom of expression.

"The Government's recent #Twitterban undermines Nigerians' ability to exercise this fundamental freedom and sends a poor message to its citizens, investors and businesses. Banning social media and curbing every citizen's ability to seek, receive, and impart information undermines fundamental freedoms," it said in a statement.

In its reaction, Twitter said it is deeply concerned by the government's action saying free and open internet is an essential human right in modern society. □

Haitians in Mexico see bleak choices as they seek protection

By CEDAR ATTANASIO

Associated Press

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (AP) —

Adrián is trying to settle in to his third new city since 2016, when his wife was raped and mother was killed in Haiti. He will go anywhere but home.

"Why do they send us back to Haiti?" he said outside a cheap Mexican hotel blocks from the border with El Paso, Texas, where he was living with his wife and about 20 other Haitians last month. "We don't have anything there. There's no security. ... I need a solution to not be sent back to my country."

Haitians rejoiced when U.S. Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas announced last month an 18-month extension of protections for Haitians living in the United States, citing "serious security concerns, social unrest, an increase in human rights abuses, crippling poverty, and lack of basic resources, which are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic."

The reprieve benefits an estimated 100,000 people who came after a devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti and are eligible for Temporary Protected Status, which gives a temporary haven to people fleeing countries struggling with civil strife or natural disasters.

Mayorkas noted that it doesn't apply to Haitians outside the U.S. and said those who enter the country may be flown home. To qualify, Haitians must have been in the United States on May 21.

The Biden administration has dismayed some pro-immigration allies by sharply increasing repatriation flights to Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital.

The government chartered 14 flights in February and 10 in March, more than any other destination, before tapering off to six flights in April, according to Witness at the Border, an advocacy group that tracks U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement flights.

Removals have continued despite Haiti's political and

humanitarian crises cited by U.S. officials in their decision to extend Temporary

plantains. Factories that export to the U.S. recruited Haitians, who also wait

Other times they start east and shift to Tijuana." Adrián, 34, said he saw ra-

tied up. He said his mother was targeted at her home and killed because she refused to participate in rallies for the Tet Kale party, whose presidential candidate, Jovenel Moïse, won the 2016 election.

Adrián believes the men who killed her and assaulted his wife worked for party bosses. He recognized one and went to the police, but nothing came of it.

Haiti has long been wracked by poverty and violence. In April, then-Prime Minister Joseph Jouthe resigned amid a spike in killings.

Other Haitians staying at the hotel with Adrián also had left Tijuana. Some said they would stay and try to find work; others said they wanted to go to the United States.

Some people who have been sent back to Haiti simply save for another attempt to cross into the U.S. "I've been back in Haiti over nine months now. I'm struggling to stay alive," said a mechanic in Port-au-Prince who was caught by border agents in South Texas.

"Soon as I crossed into the U.S., police picked us up, and the guide was nowhere to be found."

The 27-year-old man spoke on the condition of anonymity because he plans on crossing the border again. He said his training as a mechanic hasn't gotten him work in Haiti, though he plied his trade from Chile to Guatemala on his journey to the U.S.

Jean-Piere, another Haitian migrant who was trained as a mechanical engineer and spoke on condition that his last name not be published for safety reasons, spent two years in Tijuana.

After moving to Ciudad Juarez and failing to find a job, he said he wants to go to the United States. He carries a folder with documents for an eventual asylum case.

He said his father died due to "political problems" stemming from his work for Haiti's governing party.

"I can't go back to my country," Jean-Piere said. □



Haitian man listening to music leans against a wall with the Mexican national flag and a framed image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, as he waits for a bed at the Padre Chava migrant shelter Monday, Sept. 26, 2016, in Tijuana, Mexico.

Associated Press

Protected Status. Kidnappings have become commonplace. UNICEF expects child malnutrition to double this year as an indirect consequence of the pandemic in a country where 1.1 million are already going hungry.

Adrián, who spoke on condition that his last name not be published to protect his wife's identity, is among legions of Haitians who fled the Caribbean nation sometime after the 2010 earthquake. Many initially escaped to South America. He went to Chile, while others went to Brazil.

As construction jobs for the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro ended and Brazil descended into political turmoil, many Haitians crossed 10 countries by plane, boat, bus and foot to get to San Diego, where U.S. authorities let them in on humanitarian grounds. But then-President Barack Obama shifted course and began deporting Haitian arrivals in 2016. Many then started calling Mexico home.

Haitian restaurants opened in Tijuana, across the border from San Diego, serving mangoes and mashed

tables and worship at congregations that have added services in Creole.

In recent months, some Haitians have moved from Tijuana to Ciudad Juarez, another large border city with jobs at export-driven factories. They're driven by job prospects, hopes of less racial discrimination and a temptation to cross what they perceive to be less-guarded stretches of border.

The shift was evident Feb. 3 when U.S. authorities expelled dozens of Haitians to Ciudad Juarez, an apparent violation of pandemic-related powers that deny a right to seek asylum. Under the public health rules, only people from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador can quickly be sent back to Mexico.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has acknowledged the Haitian expulsions but not explained why they were done.

"They are in transit," said Nicole Phillips, legal director of Haitian Bridge Alliance, an advocacy group. "It's very much a transitory population.

They may start out in Tijuana and shift eastward.

cial discrimination in Chile and Tijuana, where he worked in data entry for a company that assembled neck braces and other medical devices.

He said he saw Mexicans getting paid more than twice as much for the same work.

He lost his job when his temporary work visa expired and heard that Ciudad Juarez had work. A straight shot by bus, he decided to take another chance on a new life.

During his first week in Ciudad Juarez last month, Adrián asked downtown merchants to let him sell items on the streets, which are still half-empty amid COVID-19. No one let him. Factories are known to hire foreigners, but he no longer had a work permit.

Adrián wants to settle in Ciudad Juarez and save money, saying he may try to get to the U.S. one day. For now, he fears being sent back Haiti too much to risk applying for asylum or enter the country illegally.

A scar on the back of his head is from being pistol-whipped by an attacker in 2016, he says, and one on his left hand is from being

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MedCare's Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Center Visit our newest Location on Palm Beach!

PALM BEACH — MedCare's Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Center just opened a third walk-in location on Palm Beach at Budget Car Rental next to Soprano's Piano Bar. The other two locations are at the Cove Mall and near the Courtyard by Marriott Aruba Resort at the Mill.

All three fit2fly test centers offer your best option for the post vacation COVID-19 test which has been a requirement since January 26th 2021 by the U.S. before returning home. All passengers going to the United States, including U.S. citizens, are required to have a negative (antigen or PCR) COVID-19 test result of a test taken maximum three days prior to boarding the flight, or documentation of recovery from COVID-19. MedCare's testing centers in and close to the hotels provide you with an easy and secure solution.

MedCare Clinic, a high-quality medical clinic that is specialized in urgent care for tourists and that has been appointed as the national COVID-19 clinic for tourists, and Laboratorio di Servizio, a full-service modern medical laboratory with state-of-the-art equipment, have partnered up to provide fast and reliable COVID-19 testing to all. Laboratorio di Servizio is ISO-15189:2012 accredited by the Dutch Council for Accreditation (M317).

Rapid PCR

As Aruba resumes to receive more and more visitors each month, one thing has become very clear: test-



ing is critical. Thus far MedCare Clinic has been offering high-volume laboratory testing with results in 24 hours or less. The newest service on the market is Rapid PCR, where you receive your results in minutes not hours.

Just steps away from you

The Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Centers are located at the Cove Mall, near the Courtyard by Marriott Aruba Resort at the Mill, and now also at Budget car rental next to Soprano's Piano Bar. These three locations at a stone's throw from your resort, condominium, or other vacation accommodation. Walk-ins are welcome. It is recommended that the tests are done timely, as the negative test is only accepted if taken up to three days before boarding your flight. MedCare Fit2Fly Testing Center at the Cove Mall is opposite the Holiday Inn and is open every day for walk-ins from 8 AM through 10 PM. MedCare's

other location is situated at The Courtyard Aruba Resort, is across the street from the RIU Hotel and is open every day from 8:30 AM until 2 PM. The Newest location at Budget Car Rental next to Soprano's Piano Bar is open daily from 5 PM to 9 PM.

At your hotel

For a selection of hotels/resorts in Aruba, MedCare has setup Testing Centers on site. The hotels/resorts at which we have a testing site are: Divi All Inclusive, Divi Dutch Village, Divi Golf, Divi Phoenix, Divi Tamarijn, Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort, Hyatt Regency, Renaissance, and the Ritz-Carlton Resort. Please contact your front desk for more information on our Testing Centers at these properties.

Costs and timing

Passengers must be tested with a viral test that could be either an Antigen Test or a nucleic acid am-

plification test (NAAT), such as the reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (PCR). The price for the Antigen Test is only \$50, and the PCR Test is available, for \$125. The new rapid PCR will be \$150 (results in 30 minutes.) MedCare offers the easier and substantially cheaper Antigen Test that is acceptable for travel to the U.S. as per the CDC guidelines. Pre-travel testing is not covered by the Aruban visitor insurance. Please contact your insurance company to verify if testing costs are insured. Results are e-mailed to you within 24 hours of testing.

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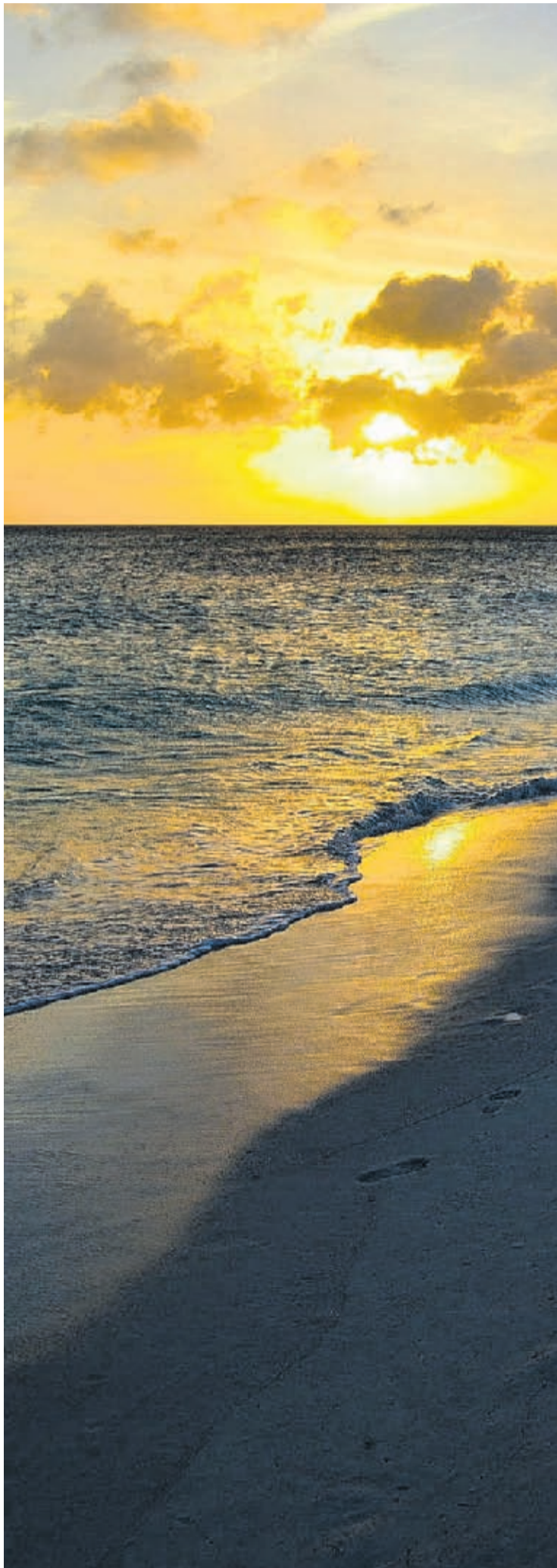
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Dutch-American Marines Exercise in Aruba

SAVANETA - US Marines come to Aruba to practice. The Caribbean Coastal Warrior exercise will start on June 5. In this annual exercise, marines of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) train together with the Dutch marines of the Marine Squadron Carib. The exercise will last until July 4.

Military cooperation between the United States and the Netherlands is close. The USMC and the Marine Corps consider each other as permanent

partners. The US Marines of the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion regularly practice in Aruba. Conversely, the Dutch marines of the Marine Squadron Carib (formerly 32 Raiding Squadron) also train annually in the United States. That happened last March.

Caribbean Coastal Warrior is an exercise in which mainly diving activities are central. For example, frogmen from the Netherlands participate in the exercise. They conduct various qualifying and certifying

dives with the United States Marine Corps. The Marine Corps provides diving instructors, collaborating with the US navies to align diving procedures more closely. This should improve effectiveness in the case of genuine joint efforts.

Training Hub

The waters of Aruba are an extremely suitable training location for both marine units. With the combination of water temperature and clarity and logistical support from marine barracks Savaneta, the conditions



are optimal for an effective and successful exercise. Caribbean Coastal Warrior fits within the ambitions of Defense in the Caribbean to position itself more (internationally) as a military training hub, both on land,

on and in the water.

COVID

The US Marines adhere to all of Aruba's COVID rules. They have been tested before departure. About 30 US Marines are coming. □

Elements Restaurant Present Aruba's only Authentic Aruban & Caribbean Buffet A feast of traditional Aruban and Caribbean flavors and ingredients overlooking one of the most spectacular beaches in the world

EAGLE BEACH — Elements Restaurant, located at Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, proudly reveals its Authentic Aruban & Caribbean Buffet, available every Monday through Saturday from 12:30 PM to 3:00 PM for \$24.50 per person. On Sundays the restaurant continues with its famous Sunday Brunch.

"We wanted to create an authentic Aruban menu that, with each bite, will take you back-in-time to your childhood home. We want you to relive the nostalgic flavors of the stews and desserts your parents and grandparents prepared. For our international customers, we want them to enjoy a traditional and culturally enrich dining experience." Ewald Biemans, owner/CEO of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, explains.

Executive Chef Marc Giesbers, Director of Food and Beverage, and his team of local & Caribbean chefs have been working hard and testing out different dishes to reimagine your lunch dining experience. The rotating menu has everything from local cornbread to polenta sticks, plantains, corn patties, Aruban ceviche, seafood salad, sulz, pickled pork, blood sausage, cucumber or papaya stoba, beef or chicken stews, fish or chicken soup, jerk chicken, Caribbean seafood paella, a pasta station, and a dessert tasting of flan, cashew cake, local fruit cake, and much more! "Our team is incredibly diverse, and our buffet assortment highlights this. Besides our traditional local dishes made by our Aruban chefs and cooks, we also offer vari-



ous Caribbean dishes created by our Jamaican, Dominican, Haitian, Colombian, and Venezuelan chefs and cooks. Each chef or cook concentrates on making an authentic dish from their region, highlight-

ing the delightful palettes they remember from infancy." Chef Marc explains. "It is also important to us to support our local farmers as much as possible. Our assortment rotates to include ingredients that



are in season, and we source as much as we can locally or from nearby regions." The award-winning and adults-only beachfront restaurant will also continue to offer their regular a-la-carte menus, which cater to all dietary needs, including vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free diets.

Don't forget that the restaurant also offers its ultra romantic private dinners for two in one of their famous beach cabanas. Guests can enjoy their meal and a Caribbean cocktail or mocktail overlooking the spectacular Eagle Beach on Elements' outdoor seating deck. Reservations are recommended and be mindful that the restaurant does not seat groups larger than six persons and does not take cash (all major credit and debit cards are accepted).

For reservations, please visit www.elementsaruba.com or call +297 583 1100. □



United Airlines sees a supersonic future

By DAVID KOENIG
AP Airlines Writer

United Airlines aims to bring back supersonic travel before the decade is over with a plane that is currently just an artist's drawing — even the prototype hasn't flown yet.

The airline said Thursday that it plans to buy 15 jets from Boom Supersonic with an option for 35 more once the start-up company designs a plane that flies faster than the speed of sound while meeting safety and environmental standards. United hopes to carry passengers on the plane in 2029. The airline said the plane will reduce flights between London and the New York area to just 3 1/2 hours and make Tokyo only six hours from San Francisco.

United declined to discuss financial terms, but Boom CEO Blake Scholl said the deal was worth \$3 billion, or \$200 million per plane with none of the discounting that is typical in the aircraft

business.

It has been nearly two decades since the last flight of the supersonic Concorde, which British Airways and Air France began using in 1976 to zip passengers in luxury across the Atlantic. The last one was retired in 2003, three years after an Air France Concorde crashed into a hotel shortly after takeoff from Paris, killing everyone on board and four people on the ground. Several companies are working to come up with new supersonic jets that would be more economical on fuel — and create fewer climate-changing emissions — than the Concorde.

Boom is working to develop an 88-seat plane it calls Overture, which it says will be the first supersonic airliner to fly on so-called sustainable fuel. Scholl said that a one-third sized prototype will make its first test flight later this year or early in 2022.

The Denver company said

the plane will be capable of speeds up to 1.7 times the speed of sound, or about 1,300 mph. That is slower than the Concorde but more than twice as fast as many current airliners.

The endorsement from United is a huge lift for Boom. Another supersonic contender, Aerion, said last month that it was running short of money to get its plane, the AS2, into production.

Supersonic jets are often banned over populated areas because of the sonic booms they create. That eliminates many potential overland routes because the planes would have to fly at less efficient subsonic speeds.

Chicago-based United believes that its coastal hubs in San Francisco and Newark, New Jersey, and its corporate-traveler clientele make it better suited than its rivals to offer supersonic service.

Mike Leskinen, United's vice president of corporate de-



This photo provided by Boom Supersonic shows an artist's rendition of United Airlines Boom Supersonic Overture jet.

Associated Press

velopment and a former aerospace analyst, said United hopes to offer both premium and economy seating but that no final decisions have been made on cabin layout.

United is sensitive about the high fares that helped doom the Concorde, and is trusting that the cost to operate the Boom plane will come down over time

as it has for other jets.

The Concorde was the pride of British and French aircraft companies, and it ushered in a new era of rapid travel over long distances. The plane had a distinctive delta-wing design that made it easily recognizable as it streaked overhead on its way to New York or Dulles Airport outside Washington. □

El Salvador president wants Bitcoin as legal tender

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — El Salvador President Nayib Bukele announced in a recorded message played at a Bitcoin conference in Miami Saturday that next week he will send proposed legislation to the country's congress that would make the cryptocurrency legal tender in the Central American nation.

The 39-year-old president, who has maintained approval ratings above 90% and made Twitter his preferred way of communicating, characterized it as an idea that could help El Salvador move forward.

"Next week I will send to Congress a bill that will make Bitcoin a legal tender in El Salvador," Bukele said.

"In the short term this will generate jobs and help provide financial inclusion to thousands outside the formal economy and in the medium and long term we hope that this small decision can help us push humanity at least a tiny bit



El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele delivers his annual address to the nation before Congress, in San Salvador, El Salvador, Tuesday, June 1, 2021.

Associated Press

into the right direction."

The U.S. dollar is El Salvador's official currency. About one quarter of El Salvador's citizens live in the United States and last year, despite the pandemic, they sent home more than \$6 billion in remittances.

Bukele's New Ideas party holds a supermajority in the new congress seated May 1, giving any legislative proposal from the president a

strong likelihood of passage.

Additional details of the plan were not released. But Bukele in subsequent messages on Twitter noted that Bitcoin could be "the fastest growing way to transfer 6 billion dollars a year in remittances." He said that a big chunk of those money transfers were currently lost to intermediaries and with Bitcoin more than a million

low-income families could benefit.

He also said 70% of El Salvador's population does not have a bank account and works in the informal economy. Bitcoin could improve financial inclusion, he said. Riding his high popularity and his party's dominance performance in Feb. 28 elections, Bukele has concentrated power.

His party's supermajority in congress ousted the justices of the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court May 1. They then replaced the attorney general.

They had been critical of some of Bukele's more drastic measures during the pandemic, including a mandatory stay-at-home order and containment centers where those caught violating the policy were detained.

While enjoying a positive relationship with former U.S. President Donald Trump, Bukele has had a much more tense relationship

with the administration of President Joe Biden.

Last month, the White House Special Envoy for the Northern Triangle Ricardo Zúñiga said during a visit to El Salvador that the U.S. government would like to see El Salvador reverse the moves against the court and the attorney general. Bukele said that would not happen. Bukele's concentration of power, attacks on critics and open disdain for checks on his power have raised concerns about El Salvador's path.

However, Bukele has a wide base of support in part due to the utter failure of the country's traditional parties who ruled during the past 30 years to improve people's lives and to his ability to provide short-term benefits.

Bukele has been praised for aggressively obtaining COVID-19 vaccines and running an efficient vaccination program far more successful than El Salvador's neighbors. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 41 Hangs low

1 Tug-of-war need

5 Way out
9 Scholar-ship basis

10 Intolerant sort

12 Deal maker

13 Game with numbered cards

14 Catch stealing, say

16 Charged particle

17 Artery problem

18 Temporary break

21 Egg layer

22 Friend of Winnie-the-Pooh

23 Comic strip unit

24 Brewing vessel

26 Naughty

29 Bahamas capital

30 One or more

31 Fitting

32 Audition

34 Flies high

37 Get up

38 Cars

39 Worker with a pick

40 Circus structure

DOWN

1 Entertain lavishly

2 Mount Hood setting

3 Wine grape

4 Words from Caesar

5 Flow out

6 Noon, on a clock

7 Set afire

8 Dress

9 Fire starter

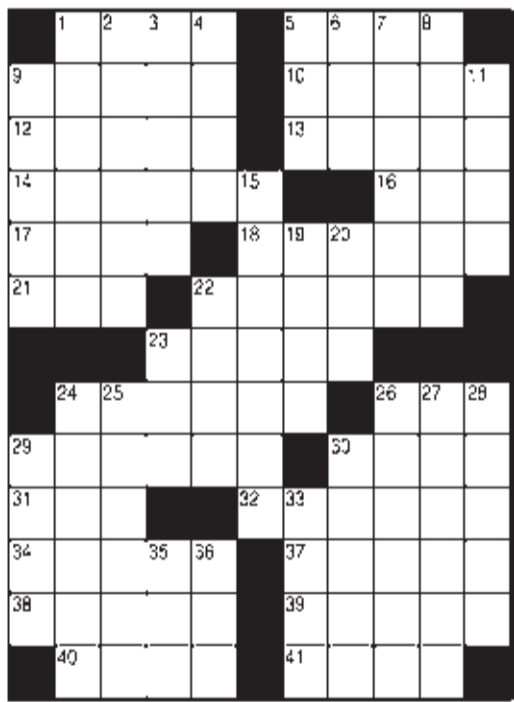
11 Great weights

15 Become less dense



Saturday's answer

- 19 "— Around" (Beach Boys hit)
20 Completely
22 One of a bear trio
23 — de deux
24 Beat, as a rhythm
25 Subject of a will
- 26 Fan disapproval
27 Entertains
28 Hinder
29 "Apollo 13" org.
30 Mideast nation
33 Ewes' mates
35 Director Howard
36 Retired jet



A X Y D L B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-7

CRYPTOQUOTE

G J I I I : G T K G B T I X T I K W J Q

K M B K C Q G O C J W N G A Y J M M .

U D G B T I X T I I W R Q J W Y I M M J W N

T I I — T H O U H O G Q E H W X H O

Saturday's Cryptoquote: ALL LOVE SHIFTS AND CHANGES. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN BE WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN LOVE ALL THE TIME. — JULIE ANDREWS

Shrinking giants: North Atlantic right whales getting tinier



In this Feb. 20, 2010 photo provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, a female North Atlantic right whale Catalog #3911, right, swims with another whale. Associated Press

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

One of the giants of the deep is shrinking before our eyes, a new study says.

The younger generation of critically endangered North Atlantic right whales are on average about three feet (one meter) shorter than whales were 20 years ago, drone and aircraft data show in a study in Thursday's journal Current Biology.

Scientists say humans are to blame. Entanglements with fishing gear, collisions with ships and climate change moving their food supply north are combining to stress and shrink these large whales, the study says.

Diminishing size is a threat to the species' overall survival because the whales aren't having as many offspring. They aren't big enough to nurse their young or even get pregnant, study authors said.

These marine mammals used to grow to 46 feet (14 meters) on average, but now the younger generation is on track to average not quite 43 feet (13 meters), according to the study.

"This isn't about 'short' right whales, it's about a physical manifestation of a physiological problem, it's the chest pain before the heart attack," said Regina Asmus-Silva, executive director of Whale and Dolphin Conservation North America, who wasn't part

of the study. "Ignoring it only leads to an inevitable tragedy, while recognizing and treating it can literally save a life, or in this case, an entire species."

There are only about 356 North Atlantic right whales left, down from 500 in 2010, said study co-author Amy Knowlton, a senior scientist at the New England Aquarium.

Other estimates put the population around 400, though researchers agree the population is shrinking. In the past, scientists and activists have concentrated solely on whale deaths, but now they realize there's a problem afflicting surviving whales that can still cause populations to further dwindle, said study co-author Michael Moore, marine mammals director at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.

The authors were able to take pictures of 129 of the right whales and use a computer program to compare them to right whales of similar age 20 years ago.

The issue emerged from a research trip several years ago when Knowlton and others saw a few small whales and a dead one. They figured the small whales were calves, less than a year old, because of their size, but checking showed the whales actually were about two years old.

Whale calves normally double in size in two years,

said study lead author Joshua Stewart, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration researcher. The study authors said the No. 1 issue with smaller right whales is entanglement in fishing gear, especially ropes that have become stronger and harder for whales to shed.

"Over 83% now of the species has been entangled at least once in their lifetime, some as many as eight times," Knowlton said. "If it doesn't kill them, it's certainly going to affect their ability to reproduce."

Collisions with ships is another problem. Both fishing gear and ship crashes have been addressed with government regulations in some normal feeding grounds for the whales. But since 2010, climate change has caused plankton the marine mammals eat to move north and east to areas without regulations, so entanglements and crashes increased, Knowlton said.

The shifting of feeding grounds has added physical stress to North Atlantic right whales, which already were skinny compared to their southern cousin species, Moore said.

"We know that climate change has affected some of their key prey sources, so entangled whales are likely experiencing a triple whammy of less food around, less ability to forage for it, while burning more energy," said Dalhousie University marine biologist Boris Worm, who was not part of the study. "It's heartbreaking to think about the lives that some of these whales lead."

Patrick Whittle contributed from Portland, Maine. □



facebook.com/arubatoday/

Maine's blueberry crop faces climate change peril

By PATRICK WHITTLE

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) —

Maine's beloved wild blueberry fields are home to one of the most important fruit crops in New England, and scientists have found they are warming at a faster rate than the rest of the state.

The warming of the blueberry fields could imperil the berries and the farmers who tend to them because the rising temperatures have brought loss of water, according to a group of scientists who are affiliated with the University of Maine.

The scientists analyzed 40 years of data and found that the state experienced a 1.1 degrees Celsius (1.98 degrees Fahrenheit) increase in average temperature, but the blueberry fields of Down East Maine experienced an increase of 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.34 degrees Fahrenheit).

That seemingly small difference is significant because rising temperatures could lead to water deficits that put the blueberries at risk, said Rafa Tasnim, a doctoral candidate in ecology and environmental science at UMaine and the study's lead author. Lack of water could result in smaller crop sizes and blueberries that are less likely to survive to be harvested.

"What we are expecting is the temperature is going to increase a lot and we will not get as much rainfall in the summertime especially," said Tasnim, who led a research team that published the study in the research journal Water earlier this year. "What that will mean for the wild blueberry plants is they will be water stressed."

Maine is home to the only commercial producers of wild blueberries in the U.S. The little berries are smaller and have a slightly different flavor than their cultivated cousins, and the vast majority of the crop is used to supply frozen fruit. Maine growers compete with those in Canada's eastern provinces, which also produce the fruit.



In this July 27, 2012, file photo, wild blueberries await harvesting in Warren, Maine.

Associated Press

The wild blueberry industry in Maine has struggled somewhat in recent years due to factors such as last year's drought and volatile markets. Farmers produced 47.4 million pounds of Maine wild blueberries last year, and that was the lowest number since 2004. The study authors found that wild blueberry growers might need to change the way they farm to prepare for future climate change. That could include changes to strategies such as irrigation and fertilizer use. The industry is up to that challenge, said Eric Venturini, executive director of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine.

"We are actively engaged in finding out how climate

change is impacting our industry and finding solutions to it," he said. "Climate change definitely poses challenge to wild blueberry farms in Maine."

The berries are widely used in processed food products. In recent years, Maine and its growers have worked to brand the berries as a health food product for the age of so-called superfoods. The blueberries are especially popular in smoothies.

The blueberries are also the subject of annual agricultural festivals, and they're the key ingredient of blueberry pie, the official state dessert. Maine's official berry is, somewhat unsurprisingly, the blueberry.

The scientists' findings dove-

tail with other research about the blueberry fields that has shown climate change to be a looming problem, said David Yarborough, emeritus professor of horticulture with the University of Maine, who was not involved in the study.

"And with increasing temperatures, that will probably be the trend into the future," Yarborough said. "What we're going to do about it is a good question." □



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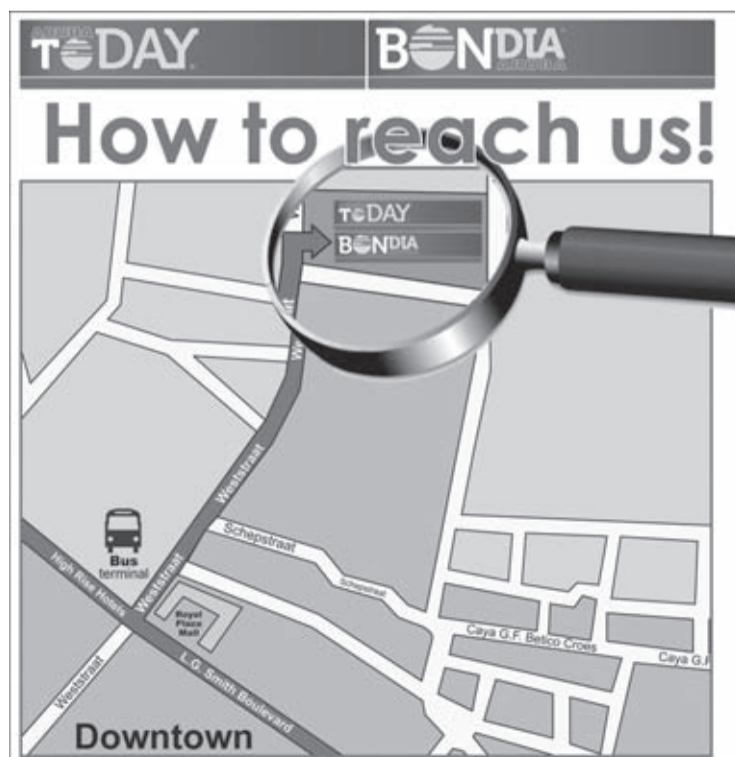
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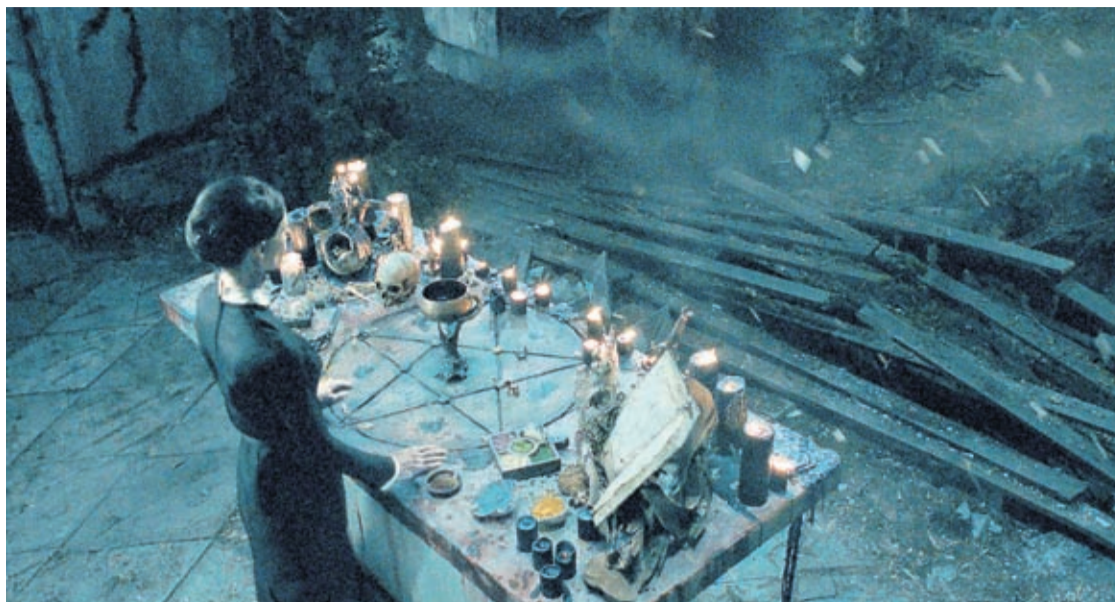
'Conjuring 3' tops 'A Quiet Place 2' as moviegoing returns

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
AP Film Writer

The domestic box office is getting back to normal, with moderate wins and sizable second weekend drops. After its triumphant first weekend, "A Quiet Place Part II" fell 59% at the North American box office leaving room for the third movie in the "Conjuring" franchise to take first place. Warner Bros.' "The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It" earned an estimated \$24 million, according to studio estimates Sunday, making it the biggest R-rated opening of the pandemic. Paramount's "A Quiet Place" sequel meanwhile earned \$19.5 million in ticket sales, bringing its domestic total to \$88.6 million.

"You normally don't see two horror movies at the top of the chart. But it was a solid weekend for both movies," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "The movie theaters are coming back and Memorial Day was no flash in the pan ... It feels like summer again."

"The Conjuring 3" has Patrick Wilson and Vera Farmiga returning as paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren. Although there's a whole extended universe set around these films that have thus far grossed over \$1.8 billion, this is the first "Conjuring" since 2016, and



This image released by Warner Bros. Entertainment shows Eugenie Bondurant in a scene from "The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It." Warner Bros. Entertainment via

the first to be helmed by someone other than James Wan (Michael Graves directed). With an additional \$26.8 million from international territories, globally, the R-rated pic has grossed over \$57.1 million.

"It's a terrific result," said Jeff Goldstein, the head of domestic distribution for Warner Bros. "We're continuing to see a ramp up of return to life outside of our homes. It was never going to be a light switch."

In a pre-pandemic world, "The Conjuring 3" might have been considered a bit disappointing—the previous installments both opened around \$40 million. But, as Goldstein noted, the third films in a horror fran-

chise often take a hit. It has another caveat too: The film is also currently streaming free for subscribers on HBO Max. Warner Media did not say how many people watched it on streaming over the weekend or how many new customers signed up for the service.

It has become more normal than not for films to embrace a hybrid day-and-date release strategy, with the major studios using their biggest titles to drive potential subscribers to their streaming services. "A Quiet Place Part II" had the rare distinction of being exclusively in theaters, but even so it will be a shorter stint than usual before it hits Paramount+.

The Walt Disney Co.'s "Cruella," which opened in theaters last weekend, was also made available to rent on Disney+ for \$29.99. The Emma Stone and Emma Thompson pic added \$11.2 million from 3,922 theaters this weekend to take third place. Disney also did not say how much it earned from streaming rentals, but the company did note the drop from last weekend was only 48%. Globally, "Cruella" has earned \$87.1 million thus far.

The animated family film "Spirit Untamed" also opened wide theatrically this weekend in 3,211 theaters to an estimated \$6.2 million. The DreamWorks Animation film features the

voices of Isabela Merced, Eiza González, Julianne Moore, Marsai Martin and Jake Gyllenhaal.

Most family films have gone straight to streaming over the past year and many big studios are opting to continue with the strategy for the near future. Disney and Pixar's "Luca" is skipping theaters and going straight to Disney+, where it will be free for subscribers on June 16. DreamWorks Animation's "Boss Baby" sequel is also debuting on Peacock Kids and in theaters on July 2.

The North American theatrical landscape is still a bit hobbled by the pandemic. Most Canadian theaters remain closed and around 27% of U.S. locations are still shuttered too. Many chains have also said vaccinated customers can now go mask free in theaters.

Hollywood titles have also started performing better than they have been internationally during the pandemic over the past few weekends. In particular, Universal's latest in the "Fast & Furious" franchise, "F9," continued to pick up speed prior to its U.S. debut on June 25. This weekend "F9," which has already grossed \$256 million from eight territories, became one of only 19 U.S. movies to have earned more than \$200 million in China. □

Associated Press

Meghan and Harry welcome second child, Lilibet 'Lili' Diana



Britain's Harry and Meghan the Duke and Duchess of Sussex arrive to attend the annual Commonwealth Day service at Westminster Abbey in London, Monday, March 9, 2020.

Associated Press

By **LINDSEY BAHR** and **JONATHAN LANDRUM**

Associated Press
Prince Harry and Meghan

may have stepped away from their royal duties — but family appeared to be top of mind in naming their second child, Lilibet "Lili" Diana Mountbatten-Windsor, who was born Friday in California.

The name pays tribute to both Harry's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, whose family nickname is Lilibet, and his late mother, Princess Diana.

"Thank you for your continued kindness and support during this very special time for our family," Harry and Meghan, also known as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, wrote in a state-

ment that accompanied the birth announcement Sunday.

The baby is "more than we could have ever imagined, and we remain grateful for the love and prayers we've felt from across the globe," they continued.

The baby girl was born at 11:40 a.m. at the Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara, California, and weighed in at 7 lbs, 11 oz, a spokesperson for the couple said. The child is eighth in line to the British throne.

A Buckingham Palace spokesperson said the

queen; Harry's father, Prince Charles; his brother, Prince William; and other members of the family had been informed and are "delighted with the news of the birth of a daughter for The Duke and Duchess of Sussex."

No photos of the newborn or the Sussexes accompanied the announcement. The couple has said that in lieu of gifts, they request those interested learn about or support nonprofit organizations working for women and girls, including Girls Inc., Harvest Home, CAMFED or Myna Mahila Foundation. □

Titans agree to deal with Falcons for Julio Jones

By TERESA M. WALKER
AP Pro Football Writer
NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The Tennessee Titans had been talking to the Atlanta Falcons about seven-time Pro Bowl wide receiver Julio Jones for nearly three weeks.

In the end, they pried Jones loose with a couple of draft picks, the highest being a second-rounder.

"We felt like it was good value for us, and Atlanta felt like it was good value for them obviously or they wouldn't have done the trade," Titans general manager Jon Robinson said Sunday, hours after the teams announced the deal.

Robinson said Jones still must pass a physical, and the Titans have "some things we've still got to work through" with the salary cap.

The Titans GM also wouldn't discuss if Jones, under contract through 2023, will be getting a revamped deal in the trade from the defending AFC South champs.

"We're going to always keep that mindset of being diligent with our approach and aggressive when we feel like we need to be aggressive," Robinson said.

The Falcons will receive the Titans' second-round pick in 2022 and their fourth-rounder in 2023 with Atlanta sending Jones and a sixth-round pick in 2023.

Jones will join an offense than already has Derrick Henry, the AP NFL Offensive Player of the Year, and a Pro Bowl receiver in A.J. Brown.

The Titans ranked fourth in scoring in 2020, and this move shores up a big hole after losing wide receiver Corey Davis and tight end Jonnu Smith in free agency in March.

Robinson said his talks with Jones didn't concern the number of passes Ryan Tannehill will throw his way. "His goal is to win," Robinson said.

Jones' new teammates quickly endorsed the trade on social media.

"J Rob is a gangster!! The man is crushing it! @Titans," left tackle Taylor Lewan wrote of Robinson on Twit-

ter. Tannehill's answer was even shorter: "Let's go!!!!!" Henry, who also played at Alabama in college like Jones, had recently shared photos of himself working

Falcons owner Arthur Blank said Jones' place in franchise history is secure.

"Julio Jones will always be part of the Falcons story, having set numerous records and creating many

nothing but the best in Tennessee and throughout his life."

The Falcons shared a video of Jones on social media and wrote, "Because of you, 11 will always mean

picked up the fifth-year option at \$15.6 million for Davis, who signed with the Jets.

Jones holds Atlanta records with 848 catches for 12,896 yards, and his 60 touchdowns ranked second. He had a career-best 136 catches for 1,871 yards in 2015. He had six straight seasons with more than 1,300 yards receiving until being limited to nine games in 2020 by a nagging hamstring injury.

He ranks first in NFL history in averaging 95.5 receiving yards per game through 135 games, ahead of Calvin Johnson's mark of 86.1 receiving yards per game.

Jones also is 20th in receiving yards and fourth behind only Jerry Rice (76), Randy Moss (64) and Marvin Harrison (59) for 100-yard receiving games with 58. Only Moss has a higher average per reception (15.6) than Jones (15.2) among all NFL players with at least 848 catches.

The Titans have five straight winning seasons that rank behind only Seattle and Kansas City in the NFL. They lost to Kansas City in the AFC championship game in the 2019 season.

Tennessee tied Buffalo for second with 396.4 yards per game in 2020 with Tannehill throwing for a career-best 33 touchdowns. Only the Kansas City Chiefs had more yards on offense, but Jones could help a passing offense that ranked 23rd in the NFL with 228.3 yards per game.

This is just the latest big deal by Robinson since being hired as general manager in January 2016.

Robinson traded the No. 1 overall pick in April 2016, and he also traded for Tannehill in March 2019 in a deal where Miami picked up a big chunk of the quarterback's salary.

Robinson and the team signed both Tannehill and Henry, the NFL's back-to-back rushing leader, to four-year extensions last year.

And Brown, the other big piece of the Titans' offense, has two years left on his rookie contract. □



Atlanta Falcons wide receiver Julio Jones (11) leaves the field during the first half of an NFL football game against the New Orleans Saints in Atlanta, in this Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020, file photo.

Associated Press

out with Jones on social media.

Brown had been lobbying hard for Jones to join the Titans on social media, and Brown shared a photo on Twitter on Sunday of himself, Jones and Henry all in Tennessee jerseys celebrating.

Los Angeles Rams cornerback Jalen Ramsey also went to social media to express his feelings that his team missed out on Jones.

great memories for all our fans, including me, since the day we drafted him," Blank said.

"He has been a fixture on our team for almost half the time I have owned the Falcons. As we both move in another direction, I'm deeply grateful for what Julio has done for our team and what he has meant to our city and, in my mind, he will always be part of the Falcons family. I wish him

more." Jones' \$15.3 million base salary for this season is guaranteed, and he was set to cost the Falcons slightly more than \$23 million against the salary cap next season. By trading him after June 1, they now split the dead money over two seasons, easing their tough financial situation.

And now the Titans have a wide receiver costing less in 2021 than if they had



Serena Williams loses at French Open; Federer withdraws

By **JEROME PUGMIRE**
AP Sports Writer

PARIS (AP) — Serena Williams turns 40 in September. Roger Federer hits that milestone the month before. No one knows how many more French Open appearances each will make, and this year's tournament ended for both on Sunday.

Williams fell way behind and could not put together a comeback against a much younger and less-



United States Serena Williams reacts after missing a shot as she plays against Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina during their fourth round match on day 8, of the French Open tennis tournament at Roland Garros in Paris, France, Sunday, June 6, 2021.

Associated Press

on Sunday. Wimbledon — which Federer has won eight times and Williams seven — begins June 28.

"I'm kind of excited to switch surfaces," Williams said. "Historically I have done pretty well on grass."

She has won 23 Grand Slam singles titles; Federer has won 20. They are two of the sport's greatest and most popular players, so it was quite a blow to the tournament, its TV part-

ners and tennis fans to see both gone from the French Open field one after the other — and a week after Naomi Osaka pulled out, citing a need for a mental health break.

Williams has won the French Open three times. But the American hasn't been past the fourth round in Paris since she was the runner-up in 2016.

Rybakina is a 21-year-old from Kazakhstan who is ranked 22nd. This was just the seventh Grand Slam appearance for Rybakina — and the first time she ever made it so much as past the second round.

"When I was small, of course, I was watching her matches on TV. So many Grand Slams," Rybakina said. Against Williams, whose right thigh carried a heavy tape job, Rybakina hit big, flat serves. She dealt with, but managed to steady, her nerves. She even produced the occasional return winner off Williams' speedy and spectacularly gifted serve, breaking her five times, including in the next-to-last game. "I knew that the serve was going to be difficult for me to return. She's powerful, but I was ready," Rybakina said. "Then, after few points, I felt ... comfortable." Rybakina said she followed her coach's strategy of sending shots to Williams' backhand side and trying to stay away from her forehand.

Every time Williams appeared as if she might turn things around, she could not quite get the momentum fully in her favor.

Down a quick break in the second set, she got to 2-all. Williams then was down 4-3 in the second set but pulled even again when Rybakina sailed a forehand well wide to get broken. □

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